

Service Delivery Case Study

Beacon Theme	Positive Youth Engagement		
Authority name	City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council		
Case Study title	On the Buses		
Theme	Partnership		
Also linked to these themes			
Influencing Services	√	ICT & media	
Grant giving		Structures for youth engagement	√
Partnerships		Social inclusion	√
Citizenship	√	Volunteering	
Summary			
<p>WakiesWatchDog are a group of young people conducting research into young people's needs in the District using a multi media arts studio along with conferences, the UK Youth Parliament Network and the Wakiesworld web site.</p> <p>WakiesWatchDog carried out research into the lack of appropriate public transport provision. They reported their findings to the Wakefield District Partnership (the Wakefield Local Strategic Partnership) at a Question Time event in December 2004. This case study describes the progress made on addressing some of the important issues for young people working in partnership with transport provider Arriva.</p> <p>Almost two years on several initiatives have been instigated to improve services around public transport.</p>			
Background			
<p>Wakefield District is in the heart of Yorkshire and the Humber, covers some 339 square kilometres and is home to 319,800 people in a diverse range of city, urban and rural communities. Approximately 61,000 (19%) are aged between 5 and 19 years.</p> <p>Wakefield has undergone major social and economic changes over the last 25 years. The loss of traditional industries has had a severe impact on local communities and the industrial heritage has also left a legacy of poor health, preventing many from re-entering work. Real progress has been made in the last three years in tackling some of these areas, becoming a thriving manufacturing, retail and distribution centre, taking full advantage of its place at the heart of the region's transport network and significant progress has been made on key flagship regeneration schemes. However, the District continues to face a number of challenges from its economic legacy.</p> <p>Wakefield is a historic seat of regional government in Yorkshire and for two centuries provided the county headquarters of the former West Riding of Yorkshire. Today the City retains its strong tradition of public services employment with the headquarters of the City</p>			

of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Assembly and West Yorkshire Police all located within the City Centre.

The make up of the Council is predominantly Labour, holding 41 of the 63 seats, Liberal Democrats with 3, Conservatives 14 and Independents 5 seats.

This case study explores the problems faced by young people working on a district level when trying to address an issue that has its roots in local, sub regional and national levels. The problems were identified by WakiesWatchDog working with young people across the District using various research methods. Progress was made by Wakefield's MYPs and WakiesSHOUT (which is the support group for Wakefield's MYPs) because they had the links to act regionally and nationally.

Key issues/problems

The Watchdog gathered specific evidence of young people's experiences of the public transport system, which demonstrated the following issues:

- Many young people are isolated and unable to get out and about because of infrequent bus services. In some areas bus services stop completely after 7pm.
- The very real problems of anti-social behaviour on some bus routes.
- The poor relationship that often exists between bus drivers and young people.
- Young people report that bus fares are too high; senior citizens receive substantial discounts to use public transport whilst young people only get half fare permits whilst in education.

What you did

- WakiesWatchDog carried out research into the lack of appropriate public transport provision. They reported their findings to the Wakefield District Partnership (the Wakefield Local Strategic Partnership) at a Question Time event in December 2004.
- Wakefield's MYPs campaigned for a special UKYP Regional Conference on public transport. This conference engaged with local bus companies and Metro (the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority).
- The UKYP Annual Conference in Leicester 2006 debated free bus transport similar to the OYSTER CARD scheme in London.
- WakiesSHOUT negotiated an Arriva-funded A5 leaflet to address the issue of mutual respect between bus drivers and young people. The leaflet will be distributed to young people and bus drivers.

Key outcomes

- A protracted campaign by UKYP to MPs to secure central government funding for free bus travel for young people.
- A dialogue between bus drivers, bus companies, and young people in the Wakefield District. It is suggested that a group of young people and a group of bus drivers meet regularly to monitor progress.

Impact

- Although it is difficult to be sure of cause and effect linkages, it is noticeable that several initiatives to improve services have been instigated. This is since young people have been making their concerns known through the WakiesWatchDog's report to the Wakefield District Partnership, and the work of the local and regional members of the UKYP with bus service companies and Metro.
- Recent improvements include specialized new yellow school buses and time of next bus text service.
- Transport managers are now willing to engage with young people's representatives to support various initiatives aimed at improving services. At present these include "mystery shopper" evaluations of service standards and the educational leaflet for young people and drivers.

Resources

It is very difficult to ascertain the costs involved as the key resource implications have been on the time of mainstream officers in supporting WakiesWatchDog, WakiesSHOUT, and the local, regional and national activities of our UKYP elected members.

Officers supported young people in raising the issues at a local District Partnership level, then through the UKYP taking the arguments to the regional level to engage with Metro and Arriva. Finally young people from Wakefield District were able to lobby central government for free travel for young people across the country.

Young people believe that if a quality bus service is provided free at the point of delivery, their involvement and use of education, employment and leisure and social facilities will increase. This will have an impact on levels of Anti Social Behaviour and social exclusion especially on estates on the margins.

Who was involved?

- WakiesWatchDog and Youth Workers.
- Young people consulted by WakiesWatchdog at various events across the District.
- Wakefield District Partnership – who supported WakiesWatchDog to progress their findings and used their influence to ensure that the issues were addressed.
- WakiesSHOUT and its support workers.
- UKYP locally, regionally, and nationally.
- Arriva and Metro senior executives.

Barriers and how were they overcome

- Initially finding who was responsible for bus services in the District, and what they were able to do within the constraints set by central government.
- Young people's initial lack of confidence when confronting senior executives in bus companies.
- Having to attend meetings in school time.
- Need for young people to remain focussed when the campaign takes time to produce results.

Critical success factors

- The fact that WakiesWatchDog were supported to produce research findings around the issues raised.
- The fact that Wakefield District Partnership was committed to addressing these issues and used their influence with the Council, Metro and Arriva.
- The fact that it was also identified as a priority by young people in the UKYP elections.
- Committed officers in partnership organisations supporting the young people.
- The fact that this is a national issue, which has been raised with central government.

How would you do it better?

Be more focused amongst all the distractions. Have clearer aims that young people can identify with and see when they are achieved.

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